

Spot Checking

Food ★ Fun ★ Frolic
By Bill Whitman

Birthdays and Gourmets

Yes sir, and did you know that Wednesday and Thursday next week marks the anniversary of the births of two of our greatest historical figures? Well, it's true — Ulysses S. Grant's day is the 27th while James Monroe's is the day after. A slight difference in the years, however. Now there's no particular data on these two stalwarts but it's just barely possible they, too, were of the gourmet class.

And if either, or both were alive today we might even find them gorging themselves on tenderloin of beef, broiled northern halibut, oven-baked chicken, or deep-fried Guaymas shrimp, which are representative of the different entrees adorning the "Early Thunderbird" dinner menu at Smith Bros. Indian Village Restaurant in Torrance.

Hungry pathfinders have no difficulty locating other similarly delectable, heaping served dishes on this early-hour menu. Supplementing the regular dinner bill-of-fare, the Early Thunderbird specialties are presented daily from 4 'til 6:30 p. m., and on Sundays from 11:30 a. m. 'til 4 p. m.

Particularly noteworthy is that guests may enjoy any of these 10 complete dinners for the absurdly low price of

\$2.95 for adults and \$1.60 for papooses, leaving enough wampum for the friendly "Medicine Man" to stir up cocktails in the Firewater Room.

Sam Failla celebrated his 2nd anniversary in business on Sepulveda at Crenshaw for his San Franciscan one nite last week and a goodly crowd was there.

And why not? In addition to Sam having many good friends and customers, he also put out a buffet spread that had everyone talking to themselves, it was that delicious.

The crowner of the evening was when super entertainer and long time friend of Sam's showed up and regaled one and all with her niteclub artistry, both piano-wise as

well as vocally. It was that fine old timer, Nellie Lutchter, who's been playing around this old world a long, long time. And the other nite she was playing just as good as she did years ago when we remembered her.

Say now, that was a doozie they held over at the Trojan Horse last week when the Chuck Stevens Trio held their swan song via one of the swiftest jam sessions witnessed in the bay area in a long while.

Seems like just everybody sat in on this whing-ding including Chick Carter and his tenor sax from the Harry James aggregation as well as the Henry Mancini group, trombonist Ron Meyers, arranger and musician for Della Reese, guitarist George Koehler and just too many more to name here.

So they saw Chuck and the boys off in fine style, making room for the new group that opened last Wednesday nite at the T.Horse, the Jim Szylan Trio, an outfit that's got some pretty good mileage on it. Catch 'em one nite soon.

But the high-light of the evening most certainly must have been the ushering in of the big birthday cake in honor of "Robbie's" (the bartender) birth anniversary.

Can't really go into detail regarding this cake and all its "trimmings" but just ask anyone that attended this combination jazz-birthday-departure celebration and they'll give you a complete run-down on the whole schmere. Really something.

Now we can't let this one

get by. Seems that Len of our Chinese family "Lon n' eLn" just passed another milestone up there on The Hills. All happened yesterday (Tuesday) and to Mrs. Meinecke, many happy returns, belated though they may be. (Hah! thought we didn't know, huh Len?) These are the people who have that swingin' Cook Your Own Steak house down there in Gardena — The Fortune Room, y'know.

Got into another swinger last week, too. Heard from Bill Smith of that real fun room the Pizza Palace on Sepulveda at Hawthorne in Torrance and we wound up drinking beer, dining on some really fine pizza, and acting as judge for the current talent show they're presenting there these nites.

Backed by the able emceeing of Shaw Anderson, the entrants trotted to the stage and turned out some excellent entertainment for two-three hours and pianist Don Burton romped in the big winner for the evenings efforts and earned a \$100 savings bond.

Runners-up were Thelma Zimmerman, Ted, Tim and Paul, Zoila Madrical, and Tom Smith — not necessarily in the order named but they were there for the final curtain none the less.

They do have fun over there at Pizza Palace, though. If you haven't dropped by, please do. You'll enjoy lots of good fun as well as great fellowship. Fine family atmosphere and everyone seems to enter into the spirit of things.

Swang at Bart Earle's Red Onion in Peninsula Center one nite last week to hear the new attraction, The Tepeyac Duo, consisting of Vicente and Antonio. Report: Velly fine! (No, they're not Chinese — that was a typographical error!)

Manager Lynn Barnes came up with a good question that nite. He was wondering... if Russia has it's Kozygin, would it be permissible for the Red Onion to use the term "Kozy Tequila?" Fair question, don'tcha think?

Keep in mind that the Red Onion is now open 7 days a week for your convenience and the giant cocktail hour (toodleseven) still prevails.

The waiter at The Matador Restaurant on Pico Blvd. in West Los Angeles broke up the tables the other nite when someone asked him (Terry is his name) if the shrimp were Spanish.

"Absolutely," says Terry. "Right from the Mediterranean... still radio-active, they're so Spanish!"

And maybe you think The Matador isn't authentic in every sense of the word, even to the Basque Cellar Room, but the most authentic (outside of owner-host Bill Fremont) is Kiki Garnica, the bartender but a real live Matador in his off-duty time. So how's that strike you!

Ah yes, the authentic foods-of-Spain available at The Matador attract people from all over the Southland. Ralph Alvarez of Torrance along with his wife and dinner guests, the Juan San Romanos of Mexico City were recent diners at this rustic little spot in W.L.A. Make the scene yourself, first chance you get.

When you can combine two

fooderies all on the same lot that's a hard-to-beat parlay. We refer, of course to the Stellino Spots at 2734 and 2738 Pacific Coast Highway in Torrance, right at Crenshaw.

The beautifully Italian restaurant presents all that the heart and palate can desire in the way of Italian cuisine as well as seafood and steaks, and the families are more than welcome. It's luncheon from 11 'til 5 and dinner from 5 'til 10 and provides excellent banquet facilities for that up-coming source you're planning.

And just next door is Stellino's Delicatessen where a complete line of the finest

European and Italian goodies line the shelves and tables with the most mouth-watering delights you can imagine, along with both imported and domestic wines and beers, plus food-to-go.

Both spots are closed on Mondays so keep in mind when next you make a trip to Stellino's.

Now it's not always a good plan to put two boys from the same part of the world together, but with these two guys, there'll be no trouble, we're sure.

We're referring to Fred Maddalone of Maddalone's Restaurant on Ave. I in Redondo Beach. But he puts out some pretty wild things and at some pretty wild prices down there! The menu's too widely diversified to enumerate all items but to give you an idea, just try the Spaghetti and meat balls on the complete dinner sometime at the friendly price of a buck seventy-five. Really most ample portions and excellent!

Then if you should have a short wait there's a comfortable cocktail lounge where you may while away the time with your favorite hi-ball. But don't be afraid to bring the kiddies. The bar is enclosed so as not to offend and big Frank Riera can turn 'em out as fast as you can order them.

Fred's charming Italian spot opens daily at five in the afternoon except Mondays (day off for the kids) and everything on the menu is set up so that you may dine in or take out, whatever your mood or time will allow.

Freddie's been here at this location since away back in

CHEF SAM House of Prime at Work



CHEF DE CUISINE... In case you've been wondering who's responsible for all the culinary artistry at The House of Prime in San Pedro, it's Sam Ray, the happy, smiling chef that serves up all that wonderful prime rib for the hungry hordes.

1956 so you know he's no "Charlie-Come-Lately" to the culinary world. That's like ten years, y'know and that's only in this town. Got a pretty complete background in the business back in Chicago, too. Give Maddalone's a whirl one of these nites soon and live a little.

Stopped in at the Lazy Lantern in Redondo Beach one nite last week and made inquiry as to who that was

doing the Flamenco dance bit with Flamenco guitarist and all-round entertainer Lydia Goya and y'know who it was? Jim Bonelli, that's who it was, and doing an excellent job of it, too. Understand it's a long long suite. The Lazy Lantern's got another new guitar man down there these nites in Tom Giffit and believe it, this'n is no slouch. Swing by one nite soon and kick some sawdust around.

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